

Meeting Minutes for the Special Meeting of the Belmont City Council (Commission Interviews)

Monday, March 3, 2003

ROLL CALL – 6:45 P.M.

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Metropulos, Wright, Bauer, Warden

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: City Clerk Cook

PUBLIC/COUNCIL COMMENTS

D. Lawhern, expressed concerns that Cal Trans would be rerouting traffic through the Sterling Downs neighborhood for freeway work. He stated there had been no notification to the neighborhood of this plan and that he learned about it when the signs were installed. Mayor Wright advised that he would ask staff to look into this issue.

Interview Candidates for Arts, Parks and Recreation (Adult and Youth), and Planning Commissions

Gardenia Kimmey (Arts) stated she wanted to do some volunteer work but never had the time before now. She encouraged her daughter to apply for a Youth Commission seat, and as a result, her daughter encouraged her to apply for a commission as well. She is a patron of music and theater/dance, likes the summer music series and would like to see it expanded. In her years in the corporate world she often worked in groups, and feels that teamwork is important. She stated her unique qualities would be that she is a patron of the arts, she has not been involved in city government, and she brings corporate experience.

Jackie Kimmey (Parks and Recreation) stated that there are 800 kids in middle school and they need to be heard. She participates in park and rec classes in San Mateo because the classes she and her friends enjoy are not offered in Belmont. She would be proactive in asking kids about issues. She stated she would commit to attending the meetings, she likes to get things done and likes to fix things. She also stated that it's good for people to be involved in community service.

Laurie Roberts-Kowalski (Parks and Recreation), stated that she has two young children, goes to the park often, and participates in some of the park

and rec programs for kids. She is impressed with parks in other cities and would like to see Belmont renovate its parks, and could possibly do so through neighborhood sponsorship. She would like to see the play structure for 5-12 year-olds be renovated, and possibly include a water play area. She stated her favorite park is Alexander Park because it is fenced and has a good play structure. She has a background in finance, is a good organizer and thinks logically. She stated she is easy to get along with and works well in a group. She also stated she doesn't like no and tries to work around and through it to get to yes. She feels that groups need a balance of leaders and followers. She also said she would like to expand opportunities for her kids as they get older.

Audrey Murray (Arts) stated that the Arts Commission had many good things on its plate, and she wants to continue to be a part of it. She would like to find ways to fund public art. She stated that people who apply for the Arts Commission are different from the other commissions, that there are more artists who have a different mind set. She stated that the subcommittee process has been working very well on the commission. She is excited about the Silicon Valley museum idea, is happy about the change of lease for the Manor Building, and would like to do more outreach with them. She outlined various areas in Belmont that would be conducive to public art, and stated the Commission has an inventory of locations.

William Kurtz (Parks and Recreation) stated he has been involved in sports organizations for 22 years. His skills include experience with organizations, he has been on committees, has been able to create revenue streams for field renovation, has a rapport with the City's Parks and Recreation staff, and would like to be involved in a more in-depth way. He recognizes that the range of activities of the Commission includes seniors, youth and other programs. He has good management, leadership and fundraising skills. He likes to think outside the box. He is also interested in open space and uses the trail system often, and has observed that there are problems with motorcycles and mountain bikers on trails. He would like to obtain additional space from the San Francisco Water Department for additional field space.

Walt Shjeflo (Parks and Recreation) stated he has enjoyed serving on the Commission and likes the wide variety of programs and ideas that are considered. He is currently serving on the Open Space Recreation Task Force, which has been a good educational experience. He stated that sometimes the Commission disagrees, but there is no animosity. He likes the priority system but does not understand the new budget system. He stated the youth commissioners have had a positive impact and have brought new ideas. He also stated that the Commission is currently well balanced and

represents a wide variety of interests. He does not feel that a male/female combination is important for making decisions.

David Long (Planning) stated that he is involved in the Central Neighborhood Association and currently serves as president. He has a reasonable perspective, has empathy with the community, and has patience for detail. He is able to question to get to the bottom of an issue, and is able to say no. He stated that the Planning Commission is a popularity contest. He outlined his criteria for granting FAR or a variance. He stated that he originally felt that having a background in building was necessary to be a Commissioner, but now feels it's a detriment. He also stated that members should represent the community, there is value in having non-experts, but he values expert information. He disagrees with the current rules restricting residential build-out in the downtown, but feels the Commission's role is not to change rules, that there are other venues for that. He has knowledge of construction, the application process, and he does well in a public setting.

Jeff Luney (Planning) stated he is a real estate professional who has lived in Belmont for two years. He was involved in his previous Los Angeles community and neighborhood, and recognizes the value in being an involved stakeholder. He stated that he is organized, has knowledge of land use and the entitlement process, and feels that projects need to have a business-oriented approach in order to streamline. He also stated that in order to make a decision, it's important to consider trade-offs, that it is a checks and balances system, that you need to look at use and the effect on other businesses and the negatives and the risk. Views and quality of life take priority when evaluating residential development. He also stated that design review doesn't have to be a question of taste, but of balance and how it fits, and exceptions can't be just for personal gain.

Warren Gibson (Planning) stated he has enjoyed his time on the Commission, that he visits sites, talks to applicants, and visits sites after project gets started. To prepare for an upcoming item he asks questions, studies the code, and does his own calculating. He stated he was very involved with the lot merger issue. He further commented that most of the time the work of the Commission is interesting, but occasionally is boring and routine. He also stated that he has been comfortable with his decisions, and only once has he changed his vote when it came back for the formal vote. He further stated that he cares when the Council overturns the Commission, but it doesn't bother him. He feels it is important to listen to a coalition that comes to meetings, but that findings need to be made, and unless he hears something to the contrary, he will stick to his convictions. He stated that the purpose of the Commission is to be a voice for the community, that expertise is not required, but real estate experience might

be helpful. He also sees the value of limited, careful development as a tradeoff for open space, and that he has ideas for the western canyon.

Aimee Swanson (Parks and Recreation/Arts) stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission attracted her the most of the two commissions. She also stated that she has become active in the community in order to make an impact. She stated that it's important to provide good programs even in a bad economy. She was previously involved in dance and could become involved in the work of the Arts Commission. She has the perspective of being a new family in town, she plans to have kids and wants to prepare for the future for them. She also brings enthusiasm, and would be interested in either commission.

William Dickenson (Planning/Arts) stated that he grew up in Belmont and is now the president of the Sterling Downs Neighborhood Association. His goal is to lobby for the neighborhood. He would like to apply his background in dealing with cities and counties. He stated that he is able to look at facts, and balance and analyze them. He stated that Belmont has character. He has attended meetings for a year, facts bring truth to projects, and he respects emotion. The skills he would bring to the Commission are facilitating and being firm on decisions. He would like to see more continuity in downtown. His priority is the Planning Commission, but he could add value to the Arts Commission as well.

ADJOURNMENT at this time, being 9:27 P.M., this meeting was adjourned.

Terri Cook

Belmont City Clerk

Meeting Tape Recorded

Tape No. 549